

The Course Fulfilled.

FUNERAL SERMON

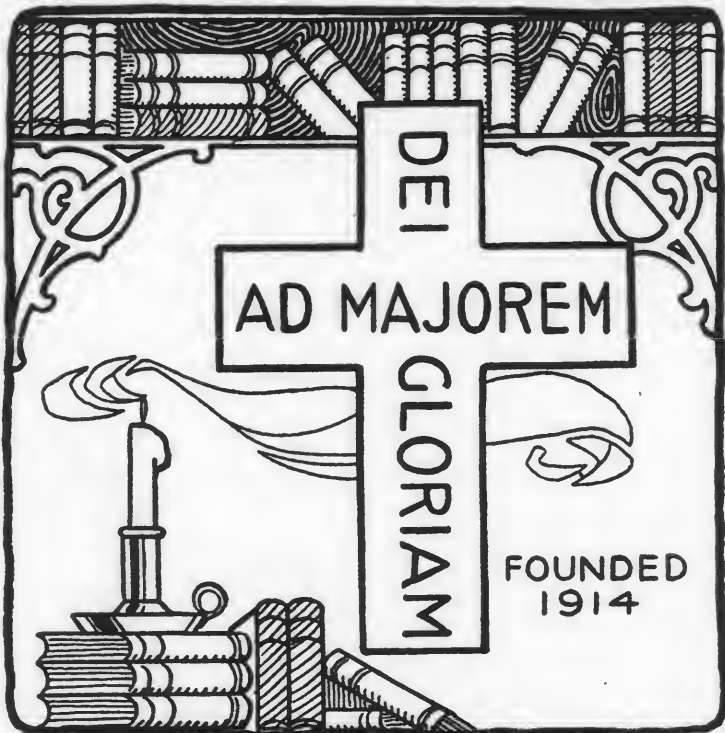
FOR

REV. CHARLES PREST,

BY

FREDERICK J. JOBSON, D.D.

School of Theology



THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY

Thursfield Smith Collection, No. 922.7-155

400



Yours truly

Pres.

The Good Shepherd

A SERMON

922.7
155

PREACHED BY THE REV. CHARLES PREST, SEPTEMBER 10TH, 1873.

ON THE DEATH OF THE

REV. CHARLES PREST,

MINISTER OF THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY, NEW YORK.

BY THE

REV. J. J. JOHNSON, D.D.

PLEA

IN THE

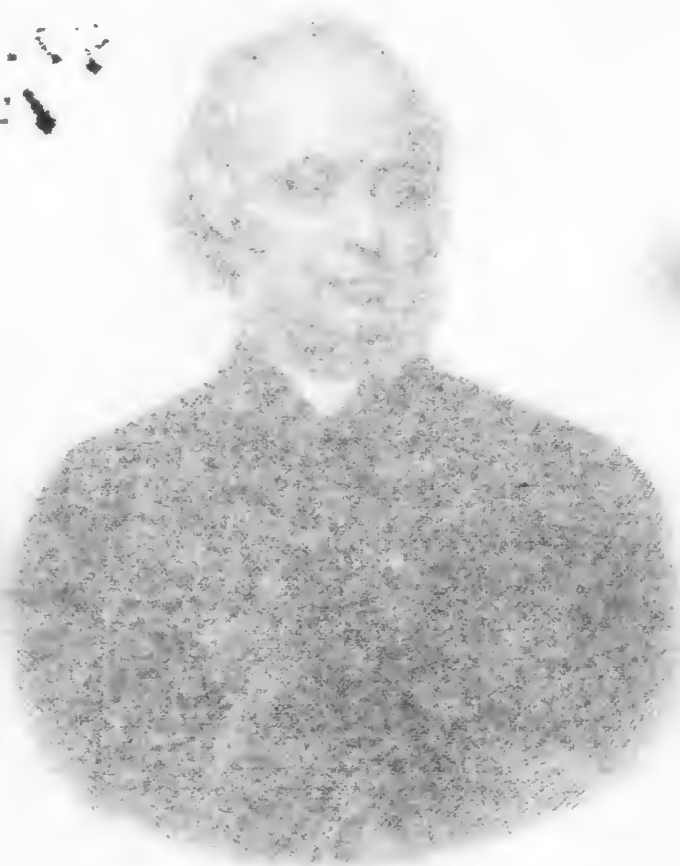
COURT OF THE COMMONS, LONDON.

BY

WILLIAM J. JOHNSON, D.D.

SERMON.

DELIVERED AT THE
GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE
METHODIST CHURCH, NEW YORK,
ON THE 10TH OF SEPTEMBER, 1873.



Your truly

John

The Course Fulfilled.



A SERMON

922.7
155

PREACHED IN CITY ROAD CHAPEL, LONDON, SEPT. 6TH, 1875.

ON THE DEATH OF THE

REV. CHARLES PREST,

GENERAL SECRETARY OF WESLEYAN HOME-MISSIONS.

WITH

A SKETCH

OF THE LIFE AND SERVICES OF THE DECEASED;

AND

A PLEA

FOR THE

MISSION WORK HE OFFICIALLY REPRESENTED.

BY

FREDERICK J. JOBSON, D.D.

London:

PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR AT THE
WESLEYAN CONFERENCE OFFICE,
2, CASTLE-ST., CITY-ROAD;
SOLD AT 66, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

BW286
P7J6

LONDON;
PRINTED BY HAYMAN BROTHERS AND LILLY,
19, CROSS ST., HATTON GARDEN, E.C.

Wes. 947

To the
COMMITTEE FOR WESLEYAN HOME-MISSIONS;
AND TO THE
FRIENDS AND PROMOTERS OF
HOME-MISSIONS
IN OUR BELOVED COUNTRY;
THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE
IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
BY THEIR
FELLOW LABOURER IN THE LORD.



PREFACE.



IT has been my favoured lot to enjoy intimate friendship with many eminent servants of God, both within and without the pale of Wesleyan Methodism. Brought early into public life, confidential alliances were formed with Christian Ministers and Laymen, some of whom were considerably my elders in years. This has been a rich and an abiding feast of enjoyment to me.

But, friendship has its "pains and penalties," as well as its privileges. I have had the grief of seeing friend after friend depart from life, and of following them to the tomb; and, of late, these sorrowful events have quickly succeeded each other. Having known them intimately, I have been called to improve, by Funeral-Services, their deaths for the living. This has been an exhaustive drain on feeling. But friendship is sacred; and claims from us the devoted guardian

ship, for the departed, of Christian character and worth. Such claims are freely acknowledged by me, for my deceased friend, the REV. CHARLES PREST, with whom I had companioned in public and social life for upwards of forty years, and whom I greatly loved and highly valued.

In thus publishing my imperfect estimate of his character and services, I yield to the request expressed by brethren and friends; and humbly hope that this slight Memorial may have, at least, some beneficial effect, in stimulating to increased earnestness of effort all who are interested in the great cause of Home-Missions which the deceased when among us represented.

F. J. J.

21, Highbury-Place, London, N.,
September, 1875.

SERMON.



ACTS XIII. 25.

"JOHN FULFILLED HIS COURSE."

THE course fulfilled by John the Baptist, as thus declared by the apostle St. Paul in the synagogue at Antioch, was that of preparing the way of the Lord, and of ushering in formally, and by heraldic proclamation, the person and kingdom of Messiah to Israel. It was a course for which he had been expressly sent of God, as foretold by prophecy seven hundred years before he was born ; for this course he was sanctified and qualified by the Holy Ghost from his birth onwards ; and for this course he separated himself from the world, and devoted himself to the performance of the duties prescribed for him by the Almighty Author of his being.

His was the most honourable course that a human being could possibly fulfil. The Saviour affirmed, " Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist ; " he was confessedly " great in the sight of the Lord ; " and in his office, as the immediate

forerunner of Jesus, he was not only a prophet, but "more than a prophet." His was a hard and severe course of abstinence and self-denial. It was not in "soft raiment" and in "king's palaces," but in the solitary barren wilderness, where he "had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey."

His was a course of bold, open denunciation of evil, both in the Church and in the State; declaring, in the fearless spirit of Elijah, the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to his baptism to be a "generation of vipers," in imminent danger of wrath to come; and condemning in the strongest terms the unlawful, incestuous alliance of royalty itself. It was a course seemingly cut off prematurely by murderous martyrdom in prison. Nevertheless, it was steadily and faithfully fulfilled, throughout, as the text records.

No doubt his righteous parents, Zacharias and Elisabeth, would early inform him of the special circumstances of his birth, and of the Divine purposes of his being; and these he carefully recognised; for, records the sacred historian,—“The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.” His crying voice of loud stern warning and rebuke rang through the wilderness, wherein he had his abode, swept over the banks of the Jordan, penetrated cities and regions beyond, and drew forth awakened multitudes from Jerusalem and all Judea to his baptism unto repentance and

amendment of life, preparatory to Messiah's coming. And when Jesus the Son of God appeared, whose increased prominence he knew and declared would decrease his own reputation, he rejoiced to set the Saviour forth as the Divinely-selected and atoning victim for the aggregate offences of all mankind; exclaiming of Him, as He stood in their midst,—“Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” Having thus accomplished his mission, he was withdrawn from public view, and sealed his fidelity to God and to man in the midnight solitude of an inner prison, under the instigation of an adulterous, revengeful woman. “John fulfilled his course.” He left no part of his appointed mission unaccomplished, and no portion of the service prescribed for him unperformed.

We are not called and separated to a distinguished course like John the Baptist. No prophecies have gone before concerning us. Jesus stands not visibly in our midst. Nevertheless, His Divine presence is surely with us. From the days of John, Jesus has been preached to mankind, through more than eighteen centuries, as their sacrificial and atoning Saviour. And such are the superior blessings of His reign of grace and salvation that even the least in His kingdom is greater than he, who, though greatest of those born of women, only trod the threshold of the Christian dispensation, and did not enter into it. In this kingdom, and under this dispensation of superior blessedness, all the professed friends of Jesus the Son of God have their appointed life-course of appointed service to fulfil.

Like the Gospel-herald of Judæa, they have to bear testimony for Christ, and, instrumentally, to bring men to repentance and salvation. They have each and all to do their part in carrying forward the Divine purpose of the world's evangelization. To this our departed friend and brother, the General Secretary of Home Missions in the Connexion to which we belong, devoted his time and powers. And this fragment of Scripture, broken off from its immediate context,—bald and bare as it may seem to be as a text for this solemn occasion—will be found to be veritably applicable to him in the fulfilment of his allotted service. While, at the same time, it will afford to us in the religious improvement of his life and death, seasonable opportunity for prayerful reflection upon our own personal responsibility as to the course of service we are individually intended to fulfil. And, surely, no Christian, whether minister or member of the Church, could desire a higher eulogium to be pronounced upon him at death, or a more honourable epitaph to be graven upon his tombstone when buried, than “He fulfilled his course!”

Leaving, then, the special and unique course of John the Baptist with these passing observations, and deferring for the present our consideration of the course fulfilled by our deceased friend, we will, in dependence on Divine help, proceed to show, freely, practically, and yet briefly, as a Scriptural introduction to what shall follow, that WE HAVE, EACH IN OUR INDIVIDUAL POSITION AND CIRCUMSTANCES, A LIFE-COURSE OF APPOINTED SERVICE TO

FULFIL; and that IT OUGHT TO BE THE GREAT ABSORBING CARE OF OUR EXISTENCE PERSONALLY TO FULFIL THAT COURSE.

Mankind are not to regard themselves as independent beings, at liberty to act according to their own disposition and choice, without accountable responsibility for what they do. All are sent by the Divine Creator to perform His will, and to accomplish His purposes. And, all will have to stand at the bar of final retribution to give account of the deeds done in the body. God will, in His righteous judgment, "render to every man according to his deeds." It ought, therefore, to be the paramount concern of every human being to know what course in his probationary life he is intended to fulfil. The beseeching cry of each man and woman, and youth of both sexes, ought to be that of awakened Saul of Tarsus,—“Lord what wilt Thou have *me* to do?” We are not left free, each to prescribe his own course. The race we have to run is “set before us;” and if we would so run as to obtain the crown of reward, we must strive lawfully.

The almighty government of God in the universe, including both the Church and the world, is a grand, united, harmonious whole, to which all parts and agencies within it are subject. Blind, uncertain *Chance*—irresistible uncontrollable *Fate*, are nowhere in it. Such empty terms have no real meaning in them, however much they may be paraded by sceptical and unbelieving persons, who would fain exclude the Divine Being from His

own realm. Ask those who use such terms, and who laud and magnify such imaginary idols, what they really mean by them—and push the inquiry closer and closer, so as to compel a positive answer, and the only reply they can at length give will be, “Nothing.” This reply is true and significant; for there is no such thing as *chance*, or *fate*, in existence. All things are, by Divine appointment, in their order, place, and course. It is so in the *material world*, and that from the rolling wonders of the firmament to the finest dust of the balance—from the expanding architecture of the heavens above us to the smallest and loosest grain of sand beneath us—from the stars in “their courses,” which fought against Sisera, to the most insignificant atom of matter deepest imbedded out of sight and underground. The balance and beauty of creation are maintained by all parts of it acting subjectively in their appointed places and courses. The *Seasons* revolve in their appointed courses, and summer and winter, seed time and harvest, do not fail, because of such appointment. All *living creatures* have their appointed courses, whether they wing their way in the heavens, roam over plains or through forests of the earth, or move through the paths of the sea. And, *Man* has his appointed place and course, both in the natural world and in the intelligent world. He is to “replenish the earth and to subdue it;”—he is to “have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air; and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” Man is expressly declared to be made “a little

lower than the angels,"—while among celestial intelligences there are "thrones and dominions, principalities and powers."

It is thus in the *moral* world of human beings. Each one has to contribute his appointed part towards the order and benefit of the whole, and that whatever may be his rank or station in life—whether king or subject, master or servant, rich or poor. All are under mutual and responsible obligation to do unto others as they would have others do to them. And it is so *religiously* and *evangelistically*. All the professed friends of the Saviour are His servants, under solemn obligation to do His will, and to spread His saving truths in the world, and that whatever may be their position and circumstances. It is not left for official members of the Church only to labour and serve for this object; but all are to do so, whether they be Ministers separated and ordained for their work, elected Stewards, appointed Leaders, Local-Preachers, Sunday-school Teachers, or private members. It is not commissioned officers only who have to act in warfare, but the whole army; and all professing Christians are soldiers and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, under positive obligation to obey His word and commandments, and to tread in His steps in the course of beneficent and spiritual service. Let this solemn truth be distinctly and positively recognised by us—that every member of the Church of God has his own appointed and responsible course of personal service to fulfil. Ministers of the Gospel, and official persons have duties to perform which un-

authorized persons ought not to intrude into. But, every Christian professor, whether he be official or unofficial, rich or poor, young or old, has his own appointed course to fulfil.

There is the more need for distinct recognition of this duty of personal service, from the prevalent disposition there is in human beings to imagine other and more favourable courses to fulfil than than what are really their own. We are all apt to take ourselves out, in thought and supposition, from the positive circumstances in which we are actually placed, and to imagine what we would do in other and different circumstances. One who is poor, says, if he were rich what a course of benevolence he would pursue; another says, if he were strong what a course of daily and unwearied usefulness he would run; and another says, if he were young and vigorous what a course of activity he would fulfil. Indeed, the disposition of human nature at large is in this direction. It is so in the world; and through indulging in such vagrant fancies of what might be done in other circumstances than those which really exist, most of the failures which occur in life may be attributed.

And it is so in the *Church*. One says, If I were a Minister, what an influential course I should fulfil! another, who is a Minister, says, if I had the superior gifts and endowments of such an one, what a brilliant course I should run! another says, if I were officially recognised in the Church—if I were a Leader, a Local-preacher, or a Sunday-school Teacher, what a course of honourable usefulness

would be before me ! Another says, If I had that rich man's means and opportunities how charitable I would be in my benefactions ! And another says, if I had strength and leisure like my neighbour, what good I would do ! Brethren, this is a common device of our great "adversary the devil, who goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour," and who by suggesting such vain imaginations transforms himself into an angel of light.

We cannot all be prominent officers in the army of Immanuel : we cannot all be leaders in His cause. A multitude of commissioned officers would embarrass any army. In the Almighty's great work of *Beneficence* and *Philanthropy*, only a few names stand forth with distinction. Our own favoured country has known but one *John Howard*, and one *Bernard Gilpin*. And it is so with *evangelistic* service. Men would have had many *St. Pauls* raised up and sent forth to reason with Jews and Gentiles out of the Scriptures, and to spread the truth through extensive regions. But God, who is wiser than men, raised up and sent forth only one *St. Paul*, and there has not been another like him. Some will imagine that if there had been twenty *Martin Luthers* brought direct out from the Church of Rome, the Protestant Reformation would have been completed, and that Popery would not have been left to plot as it is now doing among the nations of the earth. But, no ! God, who is wiser than men, has brought forth but one *Martin Luther*, and there has not appeared another like him. Others

are ready to suppose that if there had been fifty *John Wesleys* brought out of the Church of England to itinerate through the land, the tide of immorality would have been effectually stemmed, and Scriptural holiness would by this time have been universally spread among us. But God, who is wiser than men, sent forth but one John Wesley, and the Almighty only knows if He will ever send out another like him. In this case, as in other cases, the Divine declaration is signally fulfilled,—“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.” All, however, can perform the work allotted to them. And, at the last day we shall not be judged on imaginary circumstances, in which we might have been placed, but on our real and positive position, and upon what we did personally in it:—all will be judged, “every man according to his works.”

Then, let the solemn truth be recognised by all, and be individually acted upon—that each member of the Church of Christ, whether rich or poor, old or young, official or unofficial, male or female, has an appointed life-course of service to fulfil. We have each and all to “serve our generation by the will of God.” Like John the Baptist, we have to warn sinful men of danger, call them to repentance, and direct them to Jesus the Lamb of God for salvation. No one is free from obligation to this personal service. The Almighty never sent a human being into existence to do nothing: to eat, drink, sleep, and to seek recreations and pastimes in summer, and to recline

idly by a sea-coal fire, warming the hands in winter. *Pastime?* Surely, time passes away quickly enough, without our devising anything to pass it away still more quickly! Each one has his or her life-course of service to fulfil, and each one ought seriously to inquire what that appointed course of service is, and then rise resolutely to its performance.

Nor need we wait, or hesitate, on the weak superstitious ground that we have *no official call to service*. *Call to service!* Is it not the fact that hundreds of human beings are helpless and in want and destitution, *in itself*, a call to the exercise of benevolence and charity? Is it not statistically true, that in our own country there are some 30,000 persons without eyesight? That there are multitudes of cripples, sick persons, widows, and orphans, who have none to provide for them? Is there not a distinct and positive call, in all this, upon the rich to obey the apostolic charge, and to be "ready to distribute." Persons of wealth are the Lord's stewards, and are to communicate of their substance to the poor and needy. *Call to service!* Go behind those screens of high-built houses in front streets of this metropolis, to the abodes of poverty, and to the haunts of vice and wretchedness, behind them. Tread that narrow creaky staircase up into yonder inner room where no glimpse of sunshine ever appears in the daytime, and where there is no lamp or candle to afford a particle of light by night. Look around you in the dark chamber. How scanty the furniture! Where are the chairs, the table, yea, the bed? The landlord has dis-

trained for rent again and again, and article after article has gone for food, until nests of straw in the corners are all the resting-places provided for children, and until the parents have to sleep on the floor without any coverlid. Ask that pale, hollow-eyed, hungry woman, with the dingy dress, where is her husband, and she will tell you that he has gone forth to seek work. They were a family neat and tidy in the country, perhaps, recognised in connection with some Church. But times straitened upon them; and it was supposed that if they reached huge London, employment and living would be sure. It has not proved so. The gates of labour have not opened to them, and they are starving, unknowing and unknown. Is there no call for benevolent service here? Cannot the Tradesman, the Merchant, or the Workman with good wages, find a course of usefulness open for him here? Would not relief to the hungry suffering body open the way of ready entrance for spiritual instruction and counsel to the soul?

Call to service of Philanthropy and Benevolence!
Think of twenty men huddled together for work in a cellar where there is not space nor ventilation for one to breathe freely; and where employment in such circumstances means death at forty. Think of thirty pale needle-women, and more, crowded into an upper chamber to stitch night after night, until the break of day, to prepare for fashionable display at the banquet and the dance. Think of juvenile delinquency as officially reported—of boys, as well as men, betting on horses, and not with

their own money. Think of girlhood prostitution, which walks the streets in the earliest teens, and prepares for a premature grave!

Call to service! What of that young man recently up from the country, who by one act of dishonesty in the time of extravagance and temptation from spendthrift youths around him lost his situation and character; and is now left to wander forth in the streets friendless and forlorn? Clerk of the Bank or the counting-house, with a good salary and the evening's leisure, cannot you seek to rescue him from want and ruin?

Godly Matrons, who can appear where younger persons of your sex dare not venture—go to yonder house of infamy, into which, if the young man enters, he “goeth as the ox goeth to the slaughter,” and from which he returns not virtuous and with self-respect. What do you find there? “A fallen woman!” an “abandoned female!” Who is she? Is she no man's daughter? no mother's child? Did she not once smile in innocence as she nestled in maternal embrace? She was loved, caressed, promised honourable marriage, seduced, then forsaken, and excluded from society, which her seducer can still enter with acceptance; and when robbed by a heartless villain of what could never be restored to her, flung off upon the streets for public traffic in vice. She is “a woman that had been a sinner.” Had Jesus Christ no pity and forgiveness for such? Let the grateful tears and flowing ointment of Magdalene answer the inquiry. Harken to the voices of others in that house of sin! What do you

hear? Snatches of Sunday-school hymns, which tell the sad tale of brighter days called to remembrance. Is there no ground of appeal here? and no reason for hope with Christian pity and compassion?

Shall we descend to still further depths? We may find them, not many streets hence, on all sides of this venerable sanctuary. And, yet the human beings in them have never known a better state. That man was born and brought up in profligacy and vice! That woman was never known to be virtuous! That boy never knew his father. He has been from early childhood the boy of the street and the gutter! Truly such are the "lost," whom Christians are taught to seek and to save.

And, what of the thousands of men and women in all directions, who never attend any place of worship? who keep not holy the Sabbath-day? and who never open Bibles to read them, even if they have a Bible. To say nothing of open vice and criminality—of drunkenness as seen staggering forth from gin-palaces, reeling openly in the streets, or gloating in shades by the way side—to say nothing of lewdness flaunting itself on pavements, and lurking at corners of squares, lanes, and roads—*Ungodliness* is a monstrous iniquity in Christian England, both in town and country! The census of attendance at public worship statistically shows that there are multitudes of the people in this Gospel land, who literally are "without God and without hope in the world." Yes, there are thousands and tens of thousands beyond our commodious sanctuaries, and orderly services, to whom the dawn of the returning

Sabbath brings no thought of worshipping God ; and who lie down in the evening, and rise up in the morning, as the ox lies down and rises up, in its stall, with no prayer, and with no thanksgiving ! Is there no course of personal visitation and service to be performed for these ?

And if we would think of the moral and religious state of the Country, as well as of the Town ;—of villages and hamlets as well as of cities and centres of manufacture and trade, is the case relieved ? There may be less of sharpened active wickedness, but there is more of sullen ignorance. Less of the fiend, but more of the brute. And amidst scenes of rural beauty, and of “ smiling innocence,” as poets represent them, you have not only the rustic jest upon Church and Chapel goes from clumps of idle loiterers at corners of lanes and turns of roads, but you have “ field sports ” of foot-ball, wrestling, and fighting, on the Sabbath ; and you have boisterous intemperance in beerhouses between and after Church hours. Is there no call for personal service—for Evangelistic Home-Missionary labour, in all this ? Will the erection of symmetrical Churches and Chapels meet this wide-spread indifference and open contempt of public worship,—meet the crying need of the case ?

Will choral singing, chanted anthems, and ornate preaching save the loiterers and profligates who will not listen to these refined performances ? Will *National Education* regenerate these deeply fallen beings ? Water does not rise higher than its own level ; and the three *R's* do not professedly

reach anything scriptural and religious. Will *Science* elevate these deeply sunken men and women into godliness? In too many instances, it disbelieves God, denies the Scriptures, and degrades man, both as to his declared origin and fated destiny; for Evolution is now made to take the place of Creation. Nothing but the "old Jerusalem Gospel," as Bunyan termed it, can save souls: nothing but the "old Jerusalem Gospel" spoken in homes and abodes of the masses of mankind, as well as from the pulpit. How clear and positive, then, is the individual life-course of service for every Christian man, and for every Christian woman!

Call to service! The call to service is so loud, and so immediately around us, that we must be *stone-deaf* if we do not hear it; and the need is so evident and so pressing that we must be *stone-blind*, if we do not see it. *Ladies*, with long forenoons of leisure at your own command;—*Merchants*, who can enter and leave your warehouses, counting-houses, and marts of exchange as you choose; *Tradesmen* who close your shops at twilight; *Clerks and Assistants* who return to your lodgings for tea, and have long evenings for yourselves; *Servants*, who in these times have your prescribed holidays; *Working Men*, who have your noontide hours and unoccupied evenings, in these days of shortened and regulated labour—true successors of the Apostles, as to your order in society—successors of those who ploughed the ground, hewed the wood, and dragged the net;—*Working Men*, by whom Jesus built up His Church at the beginning, and by whom He has mostly

sustained it to the présent—cannot you go forth in corduroy and fustian, as well as if clad in crimson and purple, such as Art has falsely adorned the first disciples with, to “seek and save that which was lost?” The early workers in Evangelistic Methodism were masons, and miners, and itinerant field-labourers. *Working Men* forget not your distinguished vocation for Christ.

Poor Men and *Poor Women*, who have your snatches of time for doing good, notwithstanding your struggles with poverty, and that you have your hungry families to provide for, you may have under your homely garb the zeal of Paul, without the possessions of Barnabas. And there are royal magnanimous spirits, kings and queens, in single rooms of poverty, as well as in palaces of wealth and state. Young men and young women of the Church, *Sunday-school Teachers* of both sexes, are there no “little ones” in your district, worse in their condition with wicked parents than if they were orphans, to be saved from perishing?

Local Preachers, with or without full appointment by a printed plan, have you not a voice, and a Bible, and strength with which to go forth to yonder court, alley, or room, to preach Christ and Him crucified? Can you say in such circumstances, “Nothing is given me to do?” *Young Man*, cannot you take your New Testament and your Hymn-Book, and go to the bedside of the afflicted and the dying to instruct and to comfort them? Professed labourer in the vineyard of the Lord, is there no work you can do in it for God and

for man? Is there no lost sheep of the house of Israel that you can recover from the dreary mountain? —No fallen backslider you can restore to Christ and His Church? Is there not one solitary fish in all the wide sea of the world that you can gather into the Gospel net? Cannot you pick up a single grain for the evangelistic harvest? *Tract Distributor*, not only knock at the door, but enter it, and tell of the "Old, old Story" of Christ and His salvation. *Brothers of Mercy*, and *Sisters of Charity*, the call to personal service is loud, distinct, and positive.

Not merely persons in office, but all professed followers of Christ are to be Home-Missionaries for evangelizing mankind. The crying, absolute *need* constitutes the call. There is no time for hesitation, or delay, in hearkening to the obtrusive inquiry, "Are you *authorized* thus to act?" The Lord and Master of all professing Christians commands and authorises such service. He says, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the maimed, and the halt and the blind!" And if this imperative command has been obeyed to search for the destitute, the helpless, and perishing in open thoroughfares and winding by-paths, in towns and cities,—then required service extends to neglected villagers, and to unsheltered outcasts, who wander homeless in highways and hedges, and who are not only to be warned of their exposed danger, and told of Christ and His Gospel feast of salvation, but who are to be *compelled* to come in. The Home-Mission field of Christian labour is immense in extent. It

reaches to all ungodly and unregenerate persons in the United Kingdom. To all who neglect public worship ; to all who profane the Sabbath ; to all who have fallen into the entangling meshes of scepticism and infidelity ; to all who have lost faith in God, in the Scriptures, in Christ, and in immortality and eternal life ; to all wandering *backsliders*, and to all straying children of Sunday-schools and of godly parentage, as well as to all victims of the pawnshop, the gin-palace, and of the haunts of vice and profligacy. There is a positive and prescribed life-course of benevolent, evangelistic service for each and all of the followers of Jesus to fulfil.

And, as previously stated, it OUGHT TO BE THE ENGROSSING AND ALL-ABSORBING CARE OF OUR EXISTENCE TO FULFIL THAT ALLOTTED SERVICE, as did the Baptist, of whom it is recorded, "John *fulfilled* his course."

For this, there must not only be conviction of duty, but, also, *genuine, thorough-going earnestness* resulting from that conviction. It is not affected fervour which here succeeds. A painted flame possesses no heat. It is not light and easy service which will here suffice. Occasional service, as if for pastime and amusement. It is to be devoted service. The Lord Jesus Christ asks for no petty patrons of His cause, who, as ease and convenience may admit, shall smile upon it, or "give countenance to it." It is a service of *Duty* and not of convenience,—of absolute necessity and not of

chosen performance. Service for saving mankind must be energetic determined service, like that of the Nazarene in the wilderness of Judea and on the banks of the Jordan. It must be self-denying austere service. It must accuse men of sin; call upon them to repent, and to bring forth fruits of repentance; and it must direct them to Christ, the sacrificial and atoning victim for man's salvation. To honour and magnify Jesus above all personal considerations of increasing or decreasing reputation, must be the foremost object with us as it was with the Baptist. Our earnest cry to all around must be, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!"

And, if we are to *fulfil our course*, the service we thus engage in must be not only devoted and earnest, but, also, *constant and persevering*. It must not be "by fits and starts," as the saying is, but it must be steadily *continued*. Not all fervour and flaming zeal one day and all coldness and indolence the next. How much "motive-power"—to use the chosen phrase of our scientific age—is lost in the church through inconstancy. Many begin earnest service, and continue in it awhile, but break off from it before their work is complete. They gird themselves for labour, break up the fallow ground, and sow the seed, but when the reaping-time is at hand, they withhold the sickle, and, therefore, they gather no harvest. Indeed, some men's lives are "all beginnings and endings," as the phrase has it. They are as the proverb declares, "everything by turns and nothing long." Such irregular, un-

certain, broken service, will not *fulfil* the allotted course.

Would you accomplish the real end and purpose of your existence,—*would you fulfil your course?* Then you will have enough to occupy all your time, and you will have no leisure for the mean, pernicious habit, which some have, of criticising and finding fault with other workers in the cause of Christ. Alas ! Pharisaic righteousness still stands aside to complain of what others do, without stretching forth a hand of help. If any follow not with us in efforts to do good, forbid them not. And, if a little child is commencing a course of beneficent 'usefulness, bless it in the name of the Lord. *Would you fulfil your course?* Then, you will have no spare hours for inquiry upon untried, speculative plans and means for awakening and saving mankind. The Scriptural Apostolic, Christian, long tried, and Divinely-blessed means of personal visitation of the poor and the sick, of warnings of spiritual danger, and directions to behold the sacrificial Saviour, will be found sufficient. There are no more likely means for converting and saving men to be devised than reading the Scriptures, speaking and preaching to them, praying with them, and exhorting them to repent and believe the Gospel. Personal service is what is needed. Conventions of Christian workers may be good for stimulus to service. But, the sick and diseased are not healed in companies ; they are healed one by one. And sinners are converted individually, and not, usually, by multitudes.

Then, let us all give ourselves devotedly to this

service ; not scattering, but concentrating all our energies upon it, saying with the Apostle St. Paul, "This one thing I do!" Would you, like that devoted and earnest servant of our Lord, finish your course with joy, and exult in expectation of everlasting reward? Then, no more than with him, let bonds and afflictions, not even death itself, *move* you from duty. Then, when the end of your probationary life shall be reached, and you stand on the threshold of eternity, you also shall exclaim in humble triumph,—“I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have *finished my course*, I have kept the faith ; henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them, also, that love his appearing.”

There is *abiding honour*, as well as conscious satisfaction, in the faithful performance of duty. Herod's great name from the palace of royalty, and from the banquet of luxury, comes down branded with infamy, and is a by-word for execration. But, the name of John the Baptist from the solitary wilderness, and from the dungeon of martyrdom, is bright in the annals of the Church, and has a halo of glory round it that will never fade away. He relaxed not his devoted service. He resolutely and faithfully persevered in it. And though imprisoned and put to death by triumphant wickedness, “John fulfilled his course.”

His example, as here recorded, ought to stimulate

us to go and do likewise. Our course in each case, is prescribed. It is, personally, *our* course, as much and as fully as the Baptist's was *his* course. It is *defined* and *limited*. It is not an interminable course. The bounds of it are fixed which we cannot pass. "There is an appointed time to man on the earth." It is a *short* course at the longest. "Man, that is born of a woman is of few days." His days are made as a mere "handsbreadth," in the narrow and confined space which they occupy. It is an *uncertain* course in the period of its continuance. It may be cut off at any moment by "accident," and by what is termed "premature death." Where are the workers for Christ of former times? Where are the servants of God who preached in this pulpit, and laboured in Methodism for the salvation of men? Look around! You will see marble memorials of some of the more eminent of them. You may read their names, their qualities, and services, on mural columns and tablets within these walls; and the "bony dust" of many chokes up that burial-ground beyond. Those that remain will soon follow and go "the way of all living." The "course" will soon end, and the goal be reached by each one of us. In heaven itself there will be no opportunity of converting sinners from the error of their ways, or for saving souls from death.

Let us, then, every one for himself, exclaim with Jesus Christ, our great Exemplar,—“I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: for the night cometh when no man can work.” Serve and fulfil your course with confidence, believing that

“your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.” Remember Pentecost is behind you; the selfsame Spirit is with you; exceeding great and precious promises are before you. Glorious prophecies of old have yet to be fulfilled! Is it to be supposed that the Almighty intends that the social life of old England, in which martyrs bled and burnt for the Truth, is to welter evermore in filth and in misery? Is the world always to lie in the wicked one? Is it not redeemed by the precious blood of Christ? And is not the Holy Spirit sent forth to convince it of sin, of righteousness and judgment to come? Will the skies never pour down righteousness, and the earth open to bring forth salvation? In all evangelistic service have faith in God. And as a stimulus to devoted, constant, persevering service, let us ever bear in mind what the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, the Lord Almighty saith to each one of us,—“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.”

We shall next inquire how our departed friend and brother in the Lord, whose life and death we are seeking, in this service, religiously to improve for ourselves, fulfilled his course. But, before we proceed to this inquiry, it may not be inopportune for us to sing together the 327th hymn—

“O Thou who camest from above,
The pure celestial fire to’ impart,
Kindle a flame of sacred love
On the mean altar of my heart.

“ There let it for Thy glory burn,
With inextinguishable blaze ;
And trembling to its source return,
In humble prayer and fervent praise.

“ Jesus, confirm my heart's desire,
To work, and speak, and think for Thee ;
Still let me guard the holy fire,
And still stir up Thy gift in me :

“ Ready for all Thy perfect will,
My acts of faith and love repeat,
Till death Thy endless mercies seal,
And make the sacrifice complete.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.



THE REV. CHARLES PREST was born in the city of Bath, on the 16th of October, 1806. He was there educated at a local school, in which he took and retained the first place.

The circumstances attending his early religious impressions, and his entrance upon a course of public usefulness, are best learned from his own words, written in 1829 ; by which he records—

“I received, but did not improve a moral education. At a very early period of my life I contracted a violent passion for theatrical amusements, and was led into many sinful and dangerous habits. In the autumn of 1820, I was much in the company of a person who feared God ; and by his repeated admonitions and pointed reproofs, was at length led to consideration, and to feel an earnest desire to receive religious information. I soon felt deeply my depravity, and trembled for the consequences of

my sins ; whilst the language of my soul was, 'What must I do to be saved?' With these feelings, I at once abandoned my former companions ; began to attend preaching at Walcot Chapel ; and was shortly invited to Class by an uncle, who was a Leader. I went with fear and trembling ; and was instructed, encouraged, and blessed. I now began to see the way of faith more perfectly ; and sought God earnestly, expecting deliverance, and resolved to obtain salvation. Thus, I went on until the first Sabbath in 1821, when at the renewal of the Covenant in New King Street Chapel, I felt guilt and fear removed, and experienced an overwhelming sense of the Divine presence, such as I cannot describe, but which I shall ever remember. Sorrow was exchanged for joy ; and peace, as the fruit of reconciliation, sprang up in my heart. The enemy, however, came with his usual temptations, and I was again brought into fear and condemnation. This continued some time, until at length, whilst listening to a sermon on God's love to man, confidence, joy, peace, and assurance, were again afforded by a gracious God, in whose service, with many infirmities, and much unfaithfulness, I have continued until now.

"From the period of my knowing anything of the saving power of the Gospel, I felt an ardent desire that its benefits should be extended to others, —yea, to all ; and often repressed, as presumptuous, the desire to declare the love of Jesus, and to call sinners to repentance ; and frequently with feelings inexpressibly transporting, and with prayer for for-

givenness if the desire were inconsistent with God's purposes to me, I sung—

“Happy, if with my latest breath
I may but gasp His name ;
Preach Him to all, and cry in death,
Behold, behold the Lamb !”

At length, I was spoken to on the subject, and solicited to preach by several of our friends, and particularly by the Rev. RICHARD REECE, then stationed in Bath ; but still I hesitated, 'till during the Conference of 1823, two places being on the point of being neglected, I was requested by the Local Preachers' Meeting to supply this lack of service. A sense of duty now preponderated, and I engaged tremblingly in the great, awful, and glorious work : a work in which I have received, and still continue to receive many blessings ; and in which I have reason humbly to hope that I have been made a blessing.

“My mind was frequently impressed with a conviction that it was my duty to engage in the more exclusive work of the ministry ; and, after much prayer, I resolved that if Providence opened my way thereto, I would devote myself cheerfully to it. However, although many wished me to offer my services to the Methodist Conference, it was not 'till March, 1828, I was satisfied that I ought to do so. The Rev. JOSEPH SUTCLIFFE spoke to me on the subject, and I durst not refuse, seeing God had condescended to give me all the evidence on the question I could possibly require. Mr. SUTCLIFFE, therefore,

proposed me to the Bath Quarterly and District Meetings, both of which, to my great satisfaction and comfort, were unanimous in their approval. At the ensuing Conference I obtained a place in the 'List of Reserve;' and in expectation of being called into the glorious though arduous work of the ministry, I still wait, resolved to 'yield up myself unto God as one alive from the dead.' "

Towards the close of this year, 1829, he was selected by the President of the Conference, the Rev. Dr. TOWNLEY, to supply the place of the Rev. JOHN MORRIS at Bristol, who had been taken ill. After spending two or three months there, he was sent to supply a minister's place at Dunster, where he remained till the following Conference. At the Conference of 1830 he was appointed to Chipping Norton Circuit, where he laboured till 1831. Thence he removed to Daventry, where he spent two years. At this period of his probation, he and the Rev. Dr. WADDY were drawn towards each other in country Circuit-work, and by appointed meetings, and protracted conversations on what Methodism was, and on what it was capable of doing in the world, they mutually stimulated one another to devotedness in its service; and, at the same time, formed alliances of friendship that ever afterwards continued, and which strengthened with advancing years.

At the Conference of 1833, Mr. Prest received an appointment to Irwell Street, Manchester, where he went with his newly-married wife, (formerly

Miss Susanna Batchelor, of Bath,) and there he remained the three following years. While in Manchester he took a prominent part in defending and upholding the principles of Constitutional Methodism, then violently and openly assailed. His Superintendent was the Rev. EDMUND GRINDROD, and his colleague was the Rev. THOMAS H. SQUANCE, with whom he maintained firm and abiding friendship to the end of their lives. Of them he wrote afterwards,—“Mr. GRINDROD was a Man! a Christian! a Divine! a thorough Methodist! an incomparable Superintendent! and a firm affectionate friend!—Mr. SQUANCE was a delightful colleague; frank, friendly, and ready to every good work.” The stormy period through which he passed in Manchester forced upon him the minute and careful study of Methodism, in its principles and system of agencies; and, at the same time, brought him into association and counsel with the foremost legislators and workers of the Connexion, making him known to Dr. BUNTING, Dr. NEWTON, Mr. GRINDROD, and others, who at once recognised his capabilities for prominent and efficient service. After labouring three years in Bristol, with much acceptance, he was appointed to Birmingham, where he took a public position, especially during the celebration of the Centenary of Methodism, which occurred within that period.

In 1842, he came to Spitalfields Circuit in London, and was appointed to be *one of the Secretaries of the Committee of Privileges*; an office he held for nineteen years, during which his vigilance, skill, and general ability, contributed their part

towards bearing Methodism through the most violent and eventful period of its existence. Also, during this period, great public questions arose before the nation, such as the Endowment of Maynooth, the Education question, and the Dissenters' Chapel Bill; in dealing with which his powers were conspicuously manifested in committee, on the platform, and in communications with the Government; and for his services in this office he twice received the special thanks of the Conference; first, in 1844, when he was presented with a copy of Wesley's works, handsomely bound, and inscribed by Dr. BUNTING, President of the Conference, and by Dr. NEWTON, Secretary of the same; and again in 1861, on resigning this office. From the Spitalfields Circuit he went to Chelsea, and from thence to Hull, which, in the circumstance of the times, called from him arduous and trying service. From 1842 to 1857, he was also the *Ministerial Treasurer of the Schools' Fund*, and with the Rev. JOSEPH CUSWORTH, and others, took active part in the erection of New Kingswood School at Bath: a building which, on Mr. Cusworth's death, Mr. Prest justly declared would be a lasting and noble monument to his memory, and to which already many sons of Ministers look with feelings of gratitude for advantages there received.

The *Census Returns* of 1851, (in which for the first time the Religious accommodation provided by the various Denominations for the population of the kingdom was shown), aroused Mr. PREST's attention; and the want of adequate provision for Public Worship exhibited in these Returns, produced a

deep impression on his mind. This impression by prolonged reflection increased in intensity, and led to further inquiry, and to active exertion to remedy the evil, and to combat the religious indifference of the masses of the people.

Whilst Superintendent Minister of City Road Circuit in 1852, the financial difficulties in which the Connexion had been involved by the events of preceding years had led to the appointment of a Special Committee of Finance, of which Mr. PREST was a member. The reports of this Committee called forth much discussion, and prompt action, during three succeeding years; and at the Conference of 1855, in the Contingent Fund Committee, he presented a written statement on the *Home Work of Methodism*, in which were contained the germs of subsequent Home-Missionary organization and operations; he having in the meantime urged his views on the Connexion through the press. This statement was approved by the Conference; and the holding of Annual Meetings in connection with the Contingent Fund and the extension of Methodism was recommended. From September 1855 to June 1856, he addressed successively fourteen stirring Letters on the subject to the "Watchman" newspaper; and he continued to urge it upon the attention of the Connexion on all suitable occasions.

At the Conference of 1856, the subject was brought under prominent discussion; specific Resolutions were passed upon it; the name of the Fund was changed to the HOME-MISSION AND CONTINGENT FUND, and Mr. PREST was appointed Secretary for it, being

then stationed at Southwark. In 1857, so impressed was the Conference with the growing importance of the subject that he was separated from Circuit-work, and wholly set apart for the special management of this department of Methodism,—which has ever since been largely Missionary in its operations, and highly successful in its results. Previously, the Fund had floated to and fro, both in name and service. In itself, it must be regarded as the oldest established fund of Methodism, having been instituted by Wesley himself as early as the year 1749, avowedly for the relief of preaching-houses burdened with debt, in aid of inadequately-supported preachers in England, Ireland, and Scotland, who sought to propagate the Gospel where ordinary Circuits could not sustain them, and for their legal protection, by information to the King's Bench, &c., against riotous mobs who wantonly assailed them. By expenditure from the Fund for these objects, in the year 1766, it was found to be £11,383 in debt, and it was not until after continued struggles for half a century afterwards, that it was declared to be free from debt. From various sources, additions were made to the amount obtained from the "Yearly Collection," as made in the Classes for it from the beginning; and, by 1815, its title was changed from the "Legal and Merciful Fund" to the "Home-Mission Fund"—the object of extending the work of God, especially in the country parts of the United Kingdom, being more distinctly recognised. In 1835, it was placed under a mixed Committee of ministers and laymen for this purpose;

but successive difficulties arose, and, by degrees, the Fund became again involved in heavy debt, although a Special Fund for the relief of Persecuted Ministers, and that of large amount, had been provided. This led to the appointment of the Committee of Finance already named, and to the more systematic arrangements for extending godliness through the land, by evangelistic labours among the masses of the people in cities and towns, and among the scattered populations of rural districts.

It is unnecessary to proceed to detailed examination of the progress of this Home-Missionary movement, as thus organized, and as thus placed under Mr. PREST'S official guidance. It will be sufficient to give the following statistics upon it; viz., that the Fund which in the year of his official appointment for it was some £9,000, amounted last year to more than £33,000. That Home-Missionaries now employed in immediate connection with it number 120, including 16 Chaplains for the Army and the Navy; and that with successive years the amount of the Fund, and the number of Home-Missionaries have been steadily advancing.

In addition to the Home-Mission work proper, special efforts have been made to reach *Wesleyan Soldiers* and *Sailors* in the *Army* and *Navy*; and this department has been increasingly prosperous. The number of Chaplains appointed has continued to enlarge, and the results of their labours are incalculable. Many instances have occurred of soldiers in foreign lands becoming pioneer Missionaries, and

of military men showing that they were not only British but Methodist soldiers. This was a work in which Mr. PREST took deep interest. His natural spirit was martial ; he was attracted by the appearance of brave orderly men in regimental uniform devotedly serving their Sovereign and Country. Aldershot, Chatham, Woolwich, Dover, Shorncliffe, Portsmouth, Parkhurst, Falmouth, Gosport, Dublin, Curragh, Malta, Gibraltar, Bermuda, and the military march to Coomassie, all had his eager attention ; and the rights and claims of Methodist soldiers and sailors he was ever ready to protect and defend. Not unfrequently was he cheered in this work by receiving letters from godly soldiers abroad, expressing the gratitude they felt for the benefits they received from the services of Wesleyan Chaplains in garrisons, camps, and military hospitals at home.

The Home-Mission work has now attained to such proportions, and has commanded so decided a success, that it is impossible fully to appreciate the difficulties attending its progress. They were such as would have daunted ordinary men. Opposition sprung up even in its immediate surroundings. Some thought it would hinder the Foreign-Missions ; others were timorous ; and at first many were doubtful. But MR. PREST was firm and persevering ; gradually he gathered friends to his cause ; the Connexion came fully into it ; and Wesleyan Home-Missions became what they are now. It was a frequent saying of his, especially when addressing young Home-Missionary Ministers—"Difficulties are made to be overcome ;" and this expression from

him in words, he practically carried out in his own conduct.

It was due to him that with service so prominent and extensive he should have, sooner or later, the place of distinguished honour assigned to him in the Connexion ; and in 1862, five years from his special appointment as General Home-Missionary Secretary, he was elected at the first Cornwall Conference to the office of *President*. That high and responsible office he most efficiently held, as formally and gratefully acknowledged by his brethren ; exhibiting throughout the year of his Presidency the mingled qualities of firmness, fidelity, and brotherly kindness, which in other offices distinguished him. Since that period his time and energies have been devoted to the consolidation and development of Home-Missionary work with increasing success.

As years advanced upon him, and as his countenance and hair whitened with age, giving him the aspect, more and more, of paternal venerableness, increased reverence was spontaneously awarded to him. Consistent goodness, and proved faithfulness, brought to him accumulated influence, such as nothing else can secure ; so that at length, the designation of " Father Prest " began to be applied to him, and he was held in solid, and affectionate esteem by all who knew him.

The wear and tear of service, in the course of time, began at length to tell upon him. He became less alert and firm of foot, and less free in breathing. At the last Cornish Conference, of 1874, he found difficulty in ascending the hill upon which his valued

host, Mr. GEORGE SMITH, resided, though when seated among his friends he showed his usual vigour and cheerfulness, morning, noon, and late on in the evening. In the Spring of this year, difficulty of breathing increased upon him; and they who attended the last Anniversary Meeting for Home-Missions in this Chapel, will remember the struggle his indomitable energy had with physical infirmity, while giving in his own spoken, extemporaneous manner the Report of the Home-Mission Work and Fund. At the District Committee Meeting held in the Morning Chapel on these premises within a fortnight afterwards, he was duly present,—though to be here he had to be driven direct in a cab from his house at Lee; and though the short walk he had from the street in front to his seat in the Meeting, exhausted him. In the District Meeting he took his full part in all proceedings.

Soon after this more serious symptoms of disease appeared; and complication of dangerous ailments was pronounced by medical authority to be in him. I saw him in this condition; and when we were left alone, as if anticipating inquiry upon spiritual experience, he looked stedfastly upon me with his full eyes suffused with tears and said—“Well, I am deeply humbled at the review of the past; but, withal, I am exceedingly thankful.” On reminding him that he had not lived in vain, he replied, “The infinite merits of Jesus Christ’s atoning sacrifice are only what I can rely upon; but in them I have sure trust and confidence for all that I require.” In prayer and thanksgiving which followed, he was

more than ordinarily demonstrative and exultant. A few days following this interview, I saw him again, when by the nature of his disease, he had to be seated erect in his chair by day and by night, and when sleep was much broken and uncertain. He was still humble and grateful, and with much feeling he related to me how sweet had been his meditations on the twenty-third Psalm—where the Lord is declared to be a Shepherd with His people in life and death, so that they lack nothing needful for them, and fear no evil.

Before the last Conference, he was very desirous of having all due preparations made for Stations and arrangements in Home-Missions, of which he had had official charge, and carefully wrote down what seemed to him needful *memoranda* in each case. By this time, strong measures had been employed by his watchful and able medical attendant to draw downwards what had oppressed him in the region of the heart; and, for the time, his breathing was so wondrously relieved that hopes were cherished for his recovery, at least from immediate danger. He was able to leave his bedroom and associate with his family below stairs, and attend daily to correspondence. The Conference sent to him a special letter of respectful sympathy, to which he returned the following reply:—

“*Burnt Ash Lane, Lee, London, S.E.*

“*July 31, 1875.*

“MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

“The letter which I have received this morning from the Conference, signed by you and by the Secretary, deepened

my humble, grateful thankfulness to Almighty God for enabling me, by His grace, now for forty-six years, so to have conducted myself in, what has been to me, the loved service of Methodism, as to have secured and maintained the good opinion, respect, and affection of such a Body of Christian Ministers as the Wesleyan Conference.

"In all I have simply endeavoured to do my duty, I trust with some lasting benefit to the Connexion, especially to the improvement which has taken place,—and which continues,—in the allowances to inadequately supported Brethren. As health and strength may permit, I shall keep this practically before me; and nothing would give me higher satisfaction, than to see this important object secured to a much greater extent.

"Assuring you and the Conference of my profound veneration, respect, and love,

"I am,

"My dear Mr. PRESIDENT,

"Your grateful and affectionate Brother,

"CHAS. PREST."

Some of us were careful to keep him up with information on what was passing at the Conference, knowing his unabated interest in its proceedings, and his concern for all that belonged to the Connexion and its working. By the close of Conference symptoms of his former state re-appeared, and he admitted that he was not as well as he had been. I and Mrs. JOBSON visited him on the evening preceding the day on which he died. We found him surrounded by a sorrowing family of wife, children, and grandchildren; death having immediately before, and most unexpectedly, fallen upon a lovely granddaughter, Josephine Cox, when in the midst of them, and prostrated her an un-

conscious corpse before their eyes. When we entered the room where they were gathered in their mourning, he was reclining on the sofa. He instantly arose with something like his old vigour, stretched out his hand and exclaimed, heartily,—“Welcome to you!” After observations on the sad event which had befallen them, and conversation on the Conference and its proceedings, Mr. PREST said of himself,—“I am not so well as I was: I have somewhat of the old difficulty in breathing; but my prevailing state of mind is blessed! It is that of overflowing gratitude. God is good to me; and all persons are good to me. I did not look for such tokens of affection and interest towards me as I have received.—I have been, as you know, sometimes rough and stern in manner.” Mrs. JOBSON observed,—“Never were you so to me.” “No,” he replied—“not to you; but I have been somewhat so in public matters.” Again he wept with grateful feeling, and exclaimed, “God, and all are good to me.”

He spake of what had been done by the Conference for evangelistic work in rural districts, upon which his heart was strongly set, and spake of what he would do by letters in the newspapers, and by other means for carrying forward this department of the cause of God; “but,” added he, emphatically,—“You will never see in this work old Charles Prest again!”—meaning, doubtless, never see him again with his former vigour and energy. After prayer, in which mysterious restraint seemed imposed on supplication for restoration and life, we parted from him, remarking, as we left his house, how buoyant and

cheerful his spirit seemed in the solemn circumstances surrounding him; but, mutually expressing apprehension of danger from the weakness and infirmity we perceived in him. This was between eight and nine in the evening. Next morning he rose early, as he was wont in strength to do; went through the exercises of his toilette; walked down stairs into the drawing-room; probably, for devotional exercises alone; swooned; became unconscious; and after muscular struggle with the last enemy through the day, on a bed stretched for him on the floor, he fell asleep in Jesus at five o'clock of the afternoon of Wednesday, August the 25th, and entered into eternal rest at the age of sixty-nine years.

On the Saturday following, after a serene devotional service in Blackheath Chapel, in which the President and Secretary of the Conference, with the Revs. John W. Greeves, and Robert Newton Young, took part, and in which the Rev. Dr. James delivered an appropriate and excellent address; and, with plain, simple funeral appendages such as it was known he preferred, his bodily remains, and those of his deceased grand-daughter, were borne to Nunhead Cemetery, and amidst weeping friends and brethren, were interred together in the same deep grave, to rest, the one upon the other, until "the resurrection of the just."

Such are the principal facts and incidents connected with the life and death of our departed friend, the Rev. CHARLES PREST. His general cha-

racter will have already been inferred from the brief narrative thus given ; and most of you will have observed in him, for yourselves, the more prominent qualities which distinguished him ; so that it is unnecessary for me to attempt more than a very brief analysis of his character, or distinctive portrayal of his excellences.

1. In him, as in all great and good characters, was *sincerity*. This is the basis of all real excellence, and without it all professed goodness is false and worthless. No one could know Mr. PREST intimately, without perceiving that sincerity in him was true and strong. Indeed, nothing aroused his energetic nature into stormy wrath and frowning indignation more than the discovery of hypocritical and vain pretensions. This arose, not from the mere semblance of truth in him, but from the depth of his own inward integrity and uprightness. I knew him intimately for forty years,—and under all the varied circumstances of public and private associations ; and I never knew him equivocate, or swerve from naked truth in the least degree ; nor did I ever know in him a point of speech or conduct that needed explanation for clearing up any questionable matter. This quality is foremost in Scripture commendation. The *upright* are they whom God commends, and in whose service He has declared delight.

2. Another prominent excellence in the deceased, which all must have observed, was his *outspokenness*. There was no studied reserve ; no systematic concealment in him. He was frank, and manly, and said

at once what he thought and felt. True, in him was seen that "Wisdom dwells with prudence." He did not, under the vaunt of saying *all* that was thought and felt, inflict unnecessary pain by "rude honesty," as some would term it; but, under becoming limitation, he was hearty and free in speech, so that you knew exactly what he meant when he spoke. And, equally true of him, it may be said, he did not carry his heart in his open hand for all alike to share in. He was, withal, judicious and discriminating; and to strangers, who only knew him from general manner and appearance, there might seem to be in him, at times, no small amount of reserve, and even sternness. But those who knew him in more intimate relationship, know how free and outspoken he was. Indeed, with the sternness imagined by some, there was cheerfulness, and even hilarity, and that to the very end of life. Manly and firm as he was in his upright form and figure; strong and decisive as were the lines of a countenance moulded, as all countenances are, more or less, after inward disposition, there was in him the gentleness of benevolent goodness; and with the erect mien and bearing of public appearances, there was in his social and friendly life, the bend and playfulness of unsuspecting childhood. There were in his strong nature deep founts of feeling, which with expressions of love and friendship not unfrequently welled up in overflowing tears from his eyes, and which broke his firm, full sounding voice into affecting tremulousness. He was a large, warm-hearted, reliable friend; a loving and devoted

husband ; a fondly affectionate father ; and, in this sympathetic nature and the yielding to it, he was a true follower of Him who had compassion on the multitude in their necessities ; attended the Marriage Feast of Cana in Galilee ; and wept with Mary and Martha at the grave of Lazarus.

3. With this strong emotional nature in him, he was, as is well known, *decisive in opinion and judgment, and energetic and fearless in word and conduct*. In his youth, he read to practical profit what served to form many a character of that time, but which of late years has fallen too much out of young men's reading—*John Foster's Essay on Decision of Character*. When he had fully weighed in his mind the several parts of a case, and formed an opinion or judgment upon it, he did not afterwards waver from that judgment, but held it firmly and tenaciously. And, he had *courage* with which to act upon that judgment. In younger days, he was somewhat venturesome in bravery. When he had espoused a good cause he was eager to contend and fight for it. In doing so, he would face a mob, or multitude of opponents, however furious they might be ; and, in some instances, he did this with striking power of captivation. While opposed to him, they recognised his courage, and Englishmen-like, applauded his "pluck," though they were too strong in their own settled prejudices and opinions to yield assent to his arguments.

He was a staunch unyielding *Protestant*, scarcely ascribing full credit to the Government for what it did towards Papists. As long as he saw it likely to

be serviceable to the cause of Scriptural Godliness, by doing so, he was ready to openly ally himself with Protestant associations against Popery. But, recently, he lost heart in the practical efficiency of such associations; and when he found signs of betrayal of the cause of "Truth as it is in Jesus," by some of those who had publicly vowed to uphold and defend it against Romanizing errors and superstitions, he practically withdrew from such alliances; being willing to forego all cherished views of Church order and forms, rather than tolerate sacerdotal pretensions by man, or ritualistic observances fashioned after Rome. His consistency in this he declared to me in the last conversation I had with him on the evening preceding his death: a passing observation on ecclesiastical views in former times having called from him the declaration. "I have changed, in opinions on these matters," observed he, "but relations and circumstances have changed." Loyalty to Christ and to Scriptural Truth was *in* him, throughout; and all prejudices and opinions, however early received, or however fondly cherished, he would sacrifice before this.

4. In a word, he was *faithful to his convictions*, and *spoke and acted accordingly*. Mere words to him were empty sounds on which he set no value. Deeds were what he required in others, and were what he exemplified in himself. A sense of duty was strong within him, and he not only spoke of this, but acted upon it. There was a soldier-like view of obedience to authority held and enforced by him, and he carried this out in private, social, public,

and official life, and that to the end of his days. What *ought* to be done, was the question ever before him, and all other considerations were subordinated to it. This question was revolved in his mind on the last day of his life in relation to the work of Home-Missions with which he was officially connected; and, especially, as that work was needed in the more neglected rural parts of the country,—in his own county of Somerset, and elsewhere. There was, in fact, much of Divine mercy to himself in his continuance in office to the end of life; for his energetic active nature would have been severely tried by supernumerary retirement from appointed work; though the grace of God would, doubtless, have been adequately supplied to him for the trial. In office and service, he was faithful unto death, and he has now received the crown of life.

The qualities thus named, and others, also, which might be specified, appeared with him in all stations and relationships of life. They were seen in him as a *Preacher and a Pastor* in the Church of God. His preaching was clear, solid, and strong. It was addressed directly to the understanding, and wholly devoid of illustration and meretricious ornament. As if impatient of anything that seemed artificial, he spoke “right on,” out of the fulness of his mind, with a firm resounding voice, and with all the energy of his nature. *Duty*,—responsibility to God,—was here, also, the prevailing motive he employed in enforcing his arguments and appeals. With this, however, his preaching was strictly and richly evangelical. He knew well that cold didactic

statements, however forcibly applied, would not move or change the heart of fallen and depraved man. Therefore, *Christ*, the dying and atoning Saviour, and the *Holy Ghost*, the loving and Almighty Teacher, Regenerator, and Sanctifier, were prominent in all his sermons; while *Experimental* and *Practical Godliness* were his chosen themes for building up the Church of God.

In the youthful days of his ministry he was a hard, persevering, student of old divinity, as found in huge folios and in bulky quartos of Puritan and Church of England Theology. I remember well an emphatic statement by him when in his study with him at Pendleton, Manchester, nearly forty years ago: that "every sermon ought to have in it a substantial body of Scripture doctrine, to sustain practical appeals to be based upon it, in what is technically called the Application." His able treatise on *The Witness of the Holy Spirit*, which obtained favourable reviews and notices outside of Methodism, which has passed through several editions, and which still secures extended circulation, is proof that he was no mere superficial student of Scripture doctrine.

On this subject, he had conversed freely and repeatedly with the Rev. DAVID McNICOLL, who had made considerable preparations for publication upon it by extensive reading, and by marked references, but whose sudden death, at a comparatively early age, prevented his writing upon it. Mr. PREST, with deep regret for the loss of what had been thus looked for from that gifted Minister,

bent his mind to the subject in the direction indicated by Mr. McNICOLL, and delivered a discourse upon it in Cherry Street Chapel, Birmingham, in the year 1840, which was avowedly made a blessing to many who there heard it. This discourse was published at the request of the Cherry Street Leaders' Meeting, and was afterwards expanded into a volume. The book, with its arguments upon Scripture teaching, and multiplied references to testimonies by divines upon the doctrine, from the "fathers" downwards, is of real value. Mr. PREST knew how to appreciate the power of the press, as may be seen by reference to his list of publications in "Outlines of Wesleyan Bibliography," by the Rev. Dr. OSBORN. In the monthly and weekly journals of the Connexion, few persons used the press more freely than he did for the work he officially represented.

On the *Platform* he was the same direct and powerful speaker. Possessing considerable extemporaneous gift of utterance, cultivated by practice, both in preaching and platform speaking, he could readily and forcibly clothe his thoughts in firm and appropriate terms of expression; and, though sometimes rugged and inharmonious in style, he had always the higher qualities of clearness and force.

As a *Colleague* and brother in Circuit-work he was all that could be desired. It was my privilege to be twice associated with him in this relationship,—first, in Spitalfields, in 1842, and afterwards in City Road in 1852—and I ever found him diligent, trustful, and trustworthy. A more genuine lover

of Methodist Ministers there never was than CHARLES PREST; and few, if any, have done more to provide adequately for their necessities. Instrumentally, he did much to raise the allowances to Ministers among us, throughout the Connexion, to a scale more adequate to the advanced prices and cost of the necessities of our daily life. Not only brethren in "dependent Circuits," as they are termed, who have had express aid from the Home-Missionary Fund, but nearly all Ministers throughout the Connexion have been more or less indebted to him in this respect. For his loud and repeated cry on behalf of the more needy Ministers directed attention to the comparative lowness of ministerial allowances, lingering in wealthier and more capable Circuits, and led increasingly to advancement in them. His concern for this object continued to the end, as his reply to the letter from the last Conference records.

Thus our deceased friend and brother "fulfilled *his* course" of life and service. I institute no comparison of him with John the Baptist,—though an ingenious mind might do so, considering the stern, bold, energetic, persevering conduct he pursued. As already observed, the forerunner of Christ, and the Messenger expressly sent to prepare the way before *Him*, had a prescribed course to fulfil that was unique and peculiarly his own. It is, therefore, confessedly in a secondary and inferior sense that the terms of the text can be applied to Mr. PREST. Let Scripture characters ever remain separate in

their own individual dignity. But, doubtless, our departed companion in the service of the Church did *fulfil his course*; so that the words spoken by St. Paul at Antioch are not to be employed for him merely by way of passing accommodation, but with distinct and positive application. He fulfilled *his* course. He steadily, perseveringly, and faithfully pursued the service given him to do, and he did it in his own character and manner; and, in doing this, he secured a position and a name which he would not otherwise have attained. If, on looking around on the gifts and conduct of others, differently constituted and situated to himself, he had sought to model himself upon any of them, he would have been, as all imitators are, comparatively weak. Life would have become to him, relatively, a failure. Or, if he had been content to pursue officially the mere *routine* of appointed service, which at the beginning of his term of association with them belonged to Home-Missions, he would have left no distinct and abiding impress of himself upon them. But, willing to be himself, and like the great Dr. JOHNSON in his poverty, not willing to wear the shoes of another, he pursued and fulfilled his course of honourable usefulness, which will long redound to the fragrance and power of his name among us.

And now, *in conclusion*, while seeking to improve his life and death in connection with the department of Methodism he represented, suffer me to express a personal thought on the completion of

his work in connection with that department. What Mr. PREST might, or would have done for it, if he had been spared longer to us, it would be presumptuous, indeed, for us to predicate. No doubt, the Great Master would have kept his submissive and obedient servant awake to the advancing claims of progressive times; and, under Divine guidance and blessing, that servant would still have shown himself ready to adapt and apply constitutional principles to meet and fulfil them. His watchword cry among us was,—“settled principles, but judicious application of them to changes in times and circumstances.” But, usually, new hands are employed by the Almighty for new work in which mortals are called to engage. They take up the service where others have left it, and carry it further another stage. “Other men laboured and ye have entered into their labours,” says the Divine Master. Without, however, attempting to specify particulars, look around upon what is passing in these times, and say, if HOME-MISSIONS, both for town and country, are not coming increasingly into prominence and demanding more and more consideration and decisive action? How extensive is the movement everywhere on behalf of the poor and the working classes! How surely quickened into sensitive life the sympathies of the nation towards the destitute and suffering among us! until there would almost seem to be a strife among the wealthy and benevolent for service to the afflicted and the needy; and until one is sometimes afraid lest some among the poor, capable of abusing goodness, should be

pauperised into a spirit of dependence on others, rather than cultivate that manly independence which has hitherto characterised thorough-bred Englishmen.

In our time, not only streets and lanes are searched for objects of charity, but courts and alleys, cellars and garrets, and "highways and hedges." Evangelistic agencies though, as we have shown, not yet equal to the need, have been increased and multiplied, until few are left now in any locality, or region, wholly unvisited by one benevolent and religious agency or another. Even the *Nobility* of the land, and that of both sexes, are adding real lustre to their names by voluntarily becoming missionaries to the working classes and the poor. *Education for the Young*, and *Unions of Trade and Labour* in different parts of the kingdom, are bringing the masses of the people more and more into serious consideration. *Romanists*, and *high Ritualists*, (who are Romanizers under a Protestant name,) are content to abide their time of waiting until the rising generation shall have grown up in their schools and training prepared for the forms and shows of popish worship. These, and other features of the times in which we live, make it unmistakably evident that Protestant Home-Missions must have increased attention from evangelical Christians.

Conviction of this is deepening and widening in our own Connexion. The wealthy and influential of it are showing themselves not only ready to give, but also to labour for it. Not only are large sums freely offered for it, but wealthy merchants and manufac-

turers are themselves going forth in personal service on its behalf. *Town and Village Missions* are becoming household expressions among us; and *Lay Missions* is a phrase forcing itself into use in the chief centres of trade and commerce. The *evangelistic spirit* of the churches has been quickened and stimulated recently by a signal and extensive work of God attendant upon the labour of *American evangelists*. Jubilant singing, and the doctrines of free grace and salvation, which have distinguished Methodism from the beginning, have got the tongue and ear of the nation. To an observant and wakeful mind, it must appear, that most pressing and favourable circumstances are converging towards renewed, enlarged, and comprehensive action for Home-Missions in connection with Methodism; and that the time is at hand, when strong energetic, enlightened, legislative power must be brought to bear upon them to shape and "start them afresh," for fuller advancement. With the gifts and force of our deceased friend for such work, we the more mourn his removal from us at this crisis. But, he completed the work assigned to *him*. He *fulfilled his course*; and now, in seeking to improve his life and death for ourselves, and for the Connexion at large, we must unitedly, earnestly, and believingly pray that the God of our fathers may give us the succession of suitable agency which is so urgently required.

Beloved brethren in this ministry, so long and pleasantly associated with our brother now gone

from us to his reward ! Beloved people of Methodism, whether of town or country, who remember so vividly the tall manly form and pronounced utterances of him who in this sanctuary, and in other sanctuaries, pleaded so powerfully for Home-Missions—permit me, in the endeavour to improve this solemn occasion most practically, to urge upon you devoted and generous service in this department of the work of God. In doing this, I know that I am acting most in accordance with the spirit and object of my departed and beloved friend. Could he break the silence which is sealed for us upon the world of spirits, and speak to us audibly, he would undoubtedly say to me, standing as I am in the place where he often stood, “Eulogize not me ! Magnify not my unworthy efforts ! But urge my brethren and friends to the utmost to fill up the full measure of their lives with prayerful, devoted service for Christ among the more neglected and destitute of the people !” Hear him ! for “he, being dead, yet speaketh.” By a life of consecrated service to Christ and to His Church on behalf of the perishing, he bids us, like John the Baptist, each *fulfil his course*.

Beloved members of his bereaved family ! I stretch forth no rude, presumptuous hand to touch the wounds so recently made. I commend you to God, with the assurance from all Methodists who knew your husband, your father, or your grandfather, that you are dear to us all for his sake ; and that we shall not cease to pray that He who has

promised to be a husband to the widow, and a father to the fatherless, may answer the supplications of the deceased for you, and which, like the prayers and alms of Cornelius, are gone up as memorials before Him. AMEN !



BY THE SAME AUTHOR.



AUSTRALIA : WITH NOTES BY THE WAY, ON EGYPT, CEYLON, BOMBAY, AND THE HOLY LAND. With a Coloured Illustration. Third Edition. Crown 8vo., 3s. 6d.

Fine copy, cambric, gilt, 6s.

AMERICA, AND AMERICAN METHODISM : WITH A PREFATORY LETTER BY THE REV. JOHN HANNAH, D.D. Illustrated from Original Sketches by the Author. Crown 8vo., ornamented cloth, 7s. 6d.

SAVING TRUTHS. Third Edition. 18mo., cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s.

CHAPEL AND SCHOOL ARCHITECTURE. With numerous Plates and Illustrations. Octavo, 8s.

A MOTHER'S PORTRAIT. With Twenty Engravings on Wood, from Original Pictures by JAMES SMETHAM and FREDERICK J. JOBSON. Crown 8vo., 5s.

THE SERVANT OF HIS GENERATION : A TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF THE REV. JABEZ BUNTING, D.D. Crown 8vo., 4s. embossed and gilt ; 3s. plain.

THE SHIPWRECKED MINISTER, AND HIS DROWNING CHARGE. MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO THE REV. DANIEL J. DRAPER. Price 1s.

THE BELOVED DISCIPLE. FUNERAL SERMON FOR
THE REV. JOHN HANNAH, D.D. With a Biographical
Sketch of the Deceased. Crown 8vo., embossed and gilt.
Price 2s. 6d.

PRESIDENTIAL CHARGES TO YOUNG MINIS-
TERS. Crown 8vo. Price 1s.

THE WANT OF METHODISM AT THE PRE-
SENT TIME. Crown 8vo. Per hundred, 6s.

A PLEA FOR THE SUPPORT AND SPREAD
OF METHODISM IN THE VILLAGES. Crown 8vo.
Per hundred 10s.

ECCLESIASTICAL PRINCIPLES AND POLITY
OF THE WESLEYAN METHODISTS. Compiled by
WILLIAM PEIRCE ; Revised by FREDERICK J. JOBSON,
D.D. Third edition. One Vol. Royal 8vo. Cloth, gilt
lettered. Price 15s.

